

## Chairperson's report: 2024-2025

### Achievements

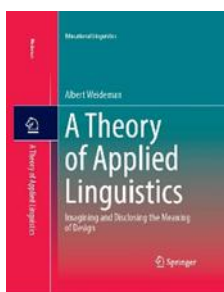
In the period being reported on, several NExLA members have excelled in authoring a number of scholarly publications. The sheer volume of this marks the coming of age of language assessment in South Africa, and puts a seal on work started more than two decades ago, stimulated especially by the substantial resources made available by ICELDA (Inter-institutional Centre for Language Development;



<https://icelda.com/>). ICELDA is an inter-university collaboration between NWU, the University of Pretoria, Stellenbosch University, and Akademia. Here are the publications just for 2024:

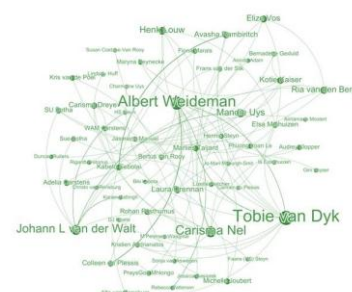
- Deygers, B. & Weideman, A. (2024). Validity and validation: An alternative perspective. Chapter 2 in Salaberry, M. R., Weideman, A. & Hsu, W-L. (eds.). *Ethics and context in second language testing: Rethinking validity in theory and practice*. Pp. 28-50. Routledge. [https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003384922\\_-3](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003384922_-3)
- Drennan, L., Joubert, M., & Weideman, A. (2024). Institutional responses to academic literacy challenges: An in-house test as an alternative for assessing academic literacy levels. *Journal for Language Teaching*, 58(2), Article 6269. <https://doi.org/10.56285/jltVol58iss2a6269>
- Green, J., Davis, C., Judith, K., Harmes, M., & Weideman, A. (2024). Using a five-phase applied linguistics design to develop a contextualized academic literacy placement test for pre-university pathway students. *Literacy Research and Instruction*. [Online]: 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388071.2024.2340031>
- Rambiritch, A. (2024). Reimagining our space: Taking social justice principles online. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the South*, 8(1), 206-226. <https://doi.org/10.36615/sotls.v8i1.3298>
- Salaberry, M R. & Weideman, A. (2024). Context, construct and ethics. Chapter 1 in Salaberry, M. R., Weideman, A. & Hsu, W-L. (eds.). *Ethics and context in second language testing: Rethinking validity in theory and practice*. Pp. 3-27. Routledge. [https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003384922\\_-2](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003384922_-2)
- Schildt, L., Deygers, B., & Weideman, A. (2024). Language testers and their place in the policy web. *Language Testing* (Online first: article first published online on 17 August 2023). <https://doi.org/10.1177/02655322231191133>

- Sebolai, K., & Mutukwa, D. (2024). A multilingual student population taking a test of academic literacy in English: Implications for test fairness. In Vogt, K. & Antia, B. E., *Multilingual assessment: Finding the nexus?* Pp. 155-184. Berlin: Peter Lang.
- Van Dyk, T., & Weideman, A. (2024). Toegepaste taalkunde. Chapter 16 in Bosman, N., & Carstens, W.A.M. (Eds.). (2024). *Kontemporêre Afrikaanse taalkunde*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Weideman, A. (2024). Advancing professionalisation: the achievement of language assessment literacy. In Baker, B., & Taylor, L. (Eds.). (2024) *Language Assessment Literacy and Competence Volume 1: Research and Reflections from the Field*. Cambridge University Press series *Studies in Language Testing* 55, p. 239-249.
- Weideman, A. (2024). *A theory of applied linguistics: Imagining and disclosing the meaning of design*. Educational Linguistics series number 65. Springer.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/9783031675591>
- Weideman, A. (2024). Ignore at your peril: Paradigm choice in applied linguistics. *Japan Association for Language Teaching Journal (JALT)*, 46(2): 195-210.  
<https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTJJ46.2-3>
- Weideman, A. (2024). Yardsticks for the future of language assessment: disclosing the meaning of measurement. Chapter 9 in Salaberry, M.R., Weideman, A. & Hsu, W-L. (eds.). *Ethics and context in second language testing: Rethinking validity in theory and practice*. Pp. 220-234. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003384922-12>



Our publications are listed, too, by author and by date, under the ‘Bibliography’ tab on the NExLA website (<https://nexla.org.za/>). Here, many of the Open Access publications have direct links to the published research, making our work more accessible. From the substantial number of hits, it is clear that our work is gaining prominence. Our international profile is further enhanced by the webmaster’s annual submission of work being done in South Africa to the bibliography of language assessment publications maintained by the International Language Testing Association (ILTA). More indications of our rising global profile are the invitations to contribute to international publications.

What is especially heartening, however, is not only the growing volume of research, but the global range, with analyses of our work and contributions originating in Australia, the UK, Europe, the USA and Japan. And in a special acknowledgement of our contributions to scholarship in South Africa, Tobie van Dyk and Albert Weideman are identified as the top two collaborators in research published in the *Journal for Language Teaching* over the last two decades, in a network analysis just published:



- Senekal, B. & Du Plessis, T. (2024). Collaboration and themes in the *Journal for Language Teaching* (2001-2023): A network analysis. *Journal for Language Teaching*, 58(2), Article 6466. <https://doi.org/10.56285/jltVol58iss2a6466>

## Workshops

This report notes the confirmation of our status not only as a global network, but also as a local one, as a special interest group (SIG) of the South African Association for Language Teaching (SAALT).

Professor Albert Weideman, Dr Kabelo Sebolai and Mr DJ Cloete participated in the SAALT annual conference held at the Breakwater Lodge in Cape Town on 10-12 July 2024, presenting a workshop on language assessment. Its first part was a presentation and discussion of five key principles of language assessment, namely relevance, theoretical defensibility, reliability, meaningfulness and efficiency. The participants were shown how language test constructs could be defined and further articulated, and how such constructs could be operationalized and related to a variety of subtests. Moreover, the presenters explained and demonstrated the role of analyses of the empirical properties of language tests in developing, piloting, refining and administering these tests.

The second and more substantial part of the workshop provided an opportunity for the participants to develop items for a number of subtests of academic literacy that have proved to yield productive measurement. In developing these items, the participants were guided by the principles discussed in the first part of the workshop and a set of specifications they were provided with. The item format chosen specifically for this workshop was multiple choice. The aim was to encourage the participants who often needed to assess the language ability of their learners to experiment with new formats and imaginative adaptations.

SAALT has proposed that similar workshops be offered in the form of webinars. The schedule below details their topics and dates.

Webinar	Date	Time	Presenter
How to improve the quality of your language assessment: a case study about switching constructs and format, and reducing hassle	19 March 2025	13:00	Prof. Albert Weideman
Your own imagination is the only limitation: Devising items for testing language ability economically, and using AI responsibly	7 May 2025	13:00	Prof. Albert Weideman
Using technical tools to enhance quality: Using TiaPlus Build 314 (freeware) for analysis	18 June 2025	13:00	Prof. Albert Weideman

Kabelo Sebolai  
**Chairperson**  
 February 2025